

STAR, OCT. 28, 1971

Clergymen are shocked by death

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unto themselves" and putting themselves "outside the law" — with the connivance of the government.

"You know the old adage 'absolute power corrupts absolutely' — well, that is what is happening here."

The general secretary of the Presbyterian Church, the Rev Edwin Pons, said that he was "disturbed by the rumours and allegations" of maltreatment of detainees. "I cannot close my ears or my heart to these things."

South Africa's stocks are at rock bottom today," was Mrs Helen Suzman's comment on the latest death in Security Police detention.

"We can write off the "outward policy" as long as such things happen," the Progressive Party's member of parliament for Houghton said.

"The very least that can be expected is a most thorough investigation into the reason for the suicide of Mr Timol and for the hospitalisation of Mr Essop.

"By this I do not mean an inter-departmental investigation. We don't want another shelved dossier as in the case of the Imam Adullah Haron and others."

Detention without trial laws should be repealed, Mrs Suzman said.

"As long as these laws remain on the statute book, death by suicide, death resulting from unknown causes or in suspicious circumstances will recur over-and-over again," Mrs Suzman said.

Detentions

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H. F. Verwoerd Hospital, Pretoria, has brought to light further detentions — Mr Timol's brother, Mr Mohamed Timol (22), and Mr Essop's sister, Miss Fatima Essop (28).

Mr Essop (21), a University of the Witwatersrand student is "in good shape," according to a hospital spokesman today. He refused to say why or when the student was admitted.

A father on dead detainee

IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN OUR SON...

THE STAR, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 29, 1971.

"IT might have been our son. You bear a child, you bring him up in joy and hope — and then this happens," said my wife when we heard of the death in detention of Mr Ahmed Timol and the serious unexplained illness of Mr Mohammed Essop. Yes, it might have been our son, or daughter.

On Sunday at 4 am there was a banging on the door; three men with a search warrant. They came in, looked at papers, periodicals, books. They were not rude, they were not officious but calmly assumed that the power vested in them gave them the right to trespass on every principle of freedom and privacy that has been won and nurtured during 3500 years of our Hebrew, Greek, Roman, Christian civilisation.

They went away at 5.30. They took no persons or documents with them — this time. After they had gone we went to communion, my wife and I. We did not know then

whether any persons had been detained, although we had heard that others had been similarly invaded. We prayed for Bernard Wrankmore breaking his fast, and those taking up the fast, in protest against detention without trial and the secrecy surrounding the death of the Imam and others in detention.

We prayed for the bodily welfare of those detained and the souls of those beyond the reach of the Security Branch. We thanked God for the health and welfare of our own children and prayed for its continuance.

THE LAW

But why, perhaps you will say, are you so concerned about the welfare of detainees? Surely people are not detained unless they have done something wrong and there must be a perfectly natural explanation for the deaths of the Imam and the others who have died while detained?

God when delivering the children of Israel from bondage enjoined them to obey the law which He gave to them. From thenceforth all civilised nations have deter-

mined guilt or innocence according to the law.

He who is not guilty before the law must be adjudged innocent and his freedom be not taken away.

If they are guilty — all those detained, hanged, placed under house arrest and banished — why are they not brought before a judge and judged according to the law?

Westcliff.

Jack Curtis

THE Reverend Bernard Wrankmore's dramatic protest has not been in vain. He has stirred the consciences of many South Africans.

The recent raids by the Security Police are very disturbing. There is a fear that legitimate opponents of apartheid are equated with enemies of South Africa.

Were the sacrifices of South African veterans of all colours in the two World Wars made in vain? They fought to maintain freedom and justice.

Berea.

D. Polnay

(Other letters on this subject have been received.)